FAMILY JEWELS

FOR WASHINGTON, D.C.

I live in a town
where pretense and bone structure
prevail as credentials
of status and beauty—
a town bewitched
by mirrors, horoscopes,
and corruption.

I intrude on this nightmare,
arm outstretched from curbside.
I'm not pointing to Zimbabwe.
I want a cab
to take me to Southeast
so I can visit my mother.
I'm not ashamed to cross
the bridge that takes me there.

No matter where I live
or what I wear
the cabs speed by.
Or they suddenly brake
a few feet away
spewing fumes in my face
to serve a fair-skinned fare.

I live in a town
where everyone is afraid
of the dark.
I stand my ground unarmed